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TYPHUS FEVER IN NEW MEXICO.

A REPORTED OUTBREAK AMONG THE NAVAJO INDIANS.

Dr. L. C. Day, of the United States Indian Service, made the following report from Albuquerque, N. Mex., April 23, of an outbreak of typhus fever among the Navajo Indians, 40 miles west of Albuquerque:

I wish to report a recent epidemic of typhus fever among the Navajo Indians, at Canoncito Cojo, about 40 miles west of here.

The first case occurred about January 1. The patient died without consulting the physician. I saw her daughter, who contracted the disease from the mother, on January 31. My diagnosis at this time was typhoid fever, though not confirmed by a Widal examination, for which I had no facilities at my disposal. March 5 I saw nine more cases, at which time I made the diagnosis of typhus fever, basing my diagnosis on the characteristic eruption appearing on the chest and abdomen and sometimes on unexposed portions of the extremities, but never on the face or hands or other exposed portions; also on the hemorrhagic condition of the mucous membrane and the characteristic ending of the fever by crisis in the case which had recovered. I now placed all the people in quarantine who were exposed to the contagion or then sick and began a campaign against the lice which infected the camp.

March 27, assisted by Supt. P. T. Lonergan, I clipped the hair of all exposed and infected cases and covered their bodies with a mixture of coal oil, lard, and sulphur. All fomites were either destroyed or sterilized and new quarters provided. No new cases developed, even among those previously exposed.

The quarantine was raised April 15. The total number of cases was 27—11 adults and 16 children. There were 4 deaths—2 children and 2 adults. Whooping cough was a complication with the children. It was my observation that, as a rule, the children ran a milder course than the adults, although nearly all the cases were seriously ill for a short time, at least, and all had a very marked eruption.

The first source of this infection was an old Mexico Mexican, who seemed ill on a visit to the camp about two weeks before the first case. Whence he came and whither he went no one was able to say, and it is a mere conjecture that he was the source of infection. However, the old woman who first became ill had been a washerwoman for old Mexico Mexicans, railroad employees a few miles from her home, and had a reputation as a wanderer in Mexican camps and Indian villages.

TYPHUS FEVER.

A BRIEF NOTE ON ITS PREVENTION.

By JOSEPH GOLDBERGER, Surgeon, United States Public Health Service.

Up to 1912 American physicians, if they gave the disease any consideration at all, regarded typhus as an exotic plague, and as a sort of medical curiosity having little more than historic interest. In that year the studies made by Anderson¹ and the writer clearly demonstrated that this disease was endemic in the city of New York at least. Since that time there have been reports of cases of apparently local origin in several of the larger American cities, such as

¹ Anderson and Goldberger, Public Health Reports, Washington, Feb. 2, 1912.